

# Nutrition

**The food and physical activity choices you make every day affect your health and how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future.**

Healthy is beautiful. Eating right and getting lots of physical activity can do wonders for your body. You feel more energetic — more confident in yourself. And when you feel good about yourself, it shows.

## **The ABCs of Nutrition:**

To stay healthy, follow these **ABCs**:

**Aim for fitness:**

- Aim for healthy weight
- Be physically active your way every day

**Build a healthy base:**

- Let the My Plate ([www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)) guide your food choices
- Choose a variety of grains daily, making at least half whole grains
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily
- Keep food safe to eat

**Choose sensibly:**

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol & moderate in total fat
- Choose beverages and foods low in sugar
- Choose and prepare food with less salt
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation

## **Why a Healthy Diet:**

Obesity is on the rise. Overall, about two thirds of all Americans are overweight or obese. As weight increases, so does the risk for serious health problems. Some of these problems include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers. Weight is affected by the amount of physical activity you engage in, your overall eating patterns, and your genes. Having a healthy diet is one of the most important things you can do to help improve your overall health.

## **Mix Up Your Choices within Each Food Group:**

**Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars.** Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and trans fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (caloric sweeteners).

**Go lean with protein.** Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. Vary your protein choices with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.

**Focus on fruits.** Eat a variety of fruits - whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried - rather than fruit juice for most of your fruit choices. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need 2 cups of fruit each day. For example two cups of fruit is equal to, 1 small banana (equal to 0.5 cup), 1 large orange (equal to 1 cup), and ¼ cup of dried (equal to 0.5 cup) apricots or peaches.

*(more on back)*

*Be Active // Be Healthy*

**Vary your veggies.** Eat more dark green vegetables such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.

**Make half your grains whole.** Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. One ounce is equal to 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta. Look at the list of ingredients to see grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn referred to as “whole.”

**Get your calcium-rich foods.** Aim for 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese (1 ½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk) every day. For kids aged 2 to 8, it's 2 cups of milk. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.

**Limit your portion sizes.** Many restaurants serve more food than one person needs at one meal. Take control of the amount of food that ends up on your plate by splitting an entrée with a friend. Or, ask the waitress/waiter for a “to-go” box and wrap up half your meal as soon as it's brought to the table.

## **Resources:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture

5 A Day The Color Way

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, My Plate

Nebraska Nutrition & Activity for Health

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

[www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

[www.dhhs.ne.gov/nafh](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/nafh)

[www.extension.unl.edu](http://www.extension.unl.edu)

## **For More Information:**

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Office of Women's and Men's Health

301 Centennial Mall South - P.O. Box 94817

Lincoln, NE 68509-4817

Phone: 800.532.2227 Fax: 402.471.0913

[www.dhhs.ne.gov/womenshealth](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/womenshealth) and [www.dhhs.ne.gov/menshealth](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/menshealth)